

CLAIMS:

- 5 1. An inflator for use in a safety device within a motor vehicle, the inflator comprising a hybrid multi-stage gas generator; the gas generator including a chamber accommodating compressed gas, a first pyrotechnic unit incorporating a first pyrotechnic charge configured so that, on actuation of the first
10 chamber containing said compressed gas; and a second pyrotechnic unit incorporating a second pyrotechnic charge configured so that on actuation of the second pyrotechnic charge, hot gas from the second pyrotechnic charge is directed into the chamber containing the compressed gas; at least one gas outlet being located in a flow path from the chamber containing compressed gas to the
15 exterior of the inflator, the gas outlet having an initial predetermined gas flow area, the gas outlet incorporating a deformable part configured to deform in response to a predetermined gas pressure, thereby increasing the gas flow area of the gas outlet.
- 20 2. An inflator according to Claim 1 wherein the deformable part comprises a neck joining a tab or flap to a component of the inflator which defines the said gas outlet, the tab or flap being at least partially surrounded by one or more slots which define the initial gas flow area.
- 25 3. An inflator according to Claim 2 wherein the tab or flap is surrounded by a horseshoe-shaped slot, the neck being defined between the ends of the slot.
4. An inflator according to Claim 2 wherein the tab or flap is of substantially square form.

5. An inflator according to Claim 2 wherein the slot is of substantially "U"-shaped form.
- 5 6. An inflator according to Claim 2 wherein the slot comprises two parallel slot parts extending from a free end of the said component.
7. An inflator according to Claim 2 wherein the tab or flap is substantially triangular.
- 10 8. An inflator according to Claim 1 wherein the deformable part of the or each gas outlet is plastically deformable.
- 15 9. An inflator according to Claim 1 wherein there are at least three said gas outlets.
10. An inflator according to Claim 1 wherein the first pyrotechnic unit defines a chamber receiving a pyrotechnic charge, there being a gas flow path leading from that chamber to a plunger such that flow of gas from the chamber will cause the plunger to move, part of the plunger being located adjacent a rupturable foil which initially seals the chamber containing the compressed gas, such that movement of the plunger will rupture the foil, thus permitting compressed gas to flow through the aperture, the or each said gas outlet being provided in a guide tube for the plunger adjacent the said aperture.